



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DECEMBER 20, 2003

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MORE TENNESSEE FAMILIES RELYING ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE

FOOD STAMP PARTICIPATION ON THE RISE

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The Tennessee Department of Human Services continues to see an increase in number of families enrolled in the Food Stamp program. The number of households seeking assistance rose more than 17 percent from November 2002 to November 2003. Household cases jumped to 339,000, as compared to 289,000 cases in November 2002. The current number of individuals in those households totals 781,000.

Food Stamp program benefits are 100 percent federally funded through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The program is administered by DHS and provides nutritional assistance benefits to children and families, the elderly, the disabled, unemployed and working families.

The rise in Food Stamp program participation can be attributed to a sluggish national economy. DHS outreach and education efforts have also contributed to the increase.

Currently in Tennessee, more than \$60 million is issued in Food Stamp benefits each month. During the month of November 2003, \$64.7 million in Food Stamp benefits were issued. For the last state fiscal year, the average household size was 2.3 persons, and the average household monthly benefit was \$172.

For more information on the Food Stamp program and to view a county by county breakdown of Food Stamp participation and issuance, visit the DHS website at:

<http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/foodstamps.htm>

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